

ORDINANCE NO. 152, 2025  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS  
AMENDING CHAPTER 24 ARTICLE IV OF THE CODE OF THE  
CITY OF FORT COLLINS RELATING TO PORTABLE SIGNS

A. City Code currently regulates the permitting and placement of portable signs on City sidewalks in Article IV of Chapter 24 of the City Code. Since the time these provisions were last updated in 2009, issues have arisen as a result of the geographical growth of the downtown over the past fifteen years.

B. The City Code provides for a portable sign placement area shown on a map dated April 3, 2009, that has been on file in the office of the City Clerk. That map is outdated with the downtown area growth, and referring to a static map limits the ability to grow with the downtown area. This Ordinance uses the Downtown zone district as identified in the Land Use Code, as the portable sign placement area, allowing that defined area to grow along with the downtown area.

C. To obtain a sign permit, the City Code requires that an applicant must: (1) sign an indemnity agreement; (2) obtain a \$1 million insurance policy naming City as insured; and (3) pay an annual fee. Although there is a large number of portable signs downtown, only approximately 15% of them are permitted. This Ordinance lessens the burdens for obtaining a permit to encourage compliance. This Ordinance specifically continues the indemnity agreement requirement, removes the insurance requirement, provides for a one-time fee for the duration of the permit, and extends the validity of a permit to last as long as the indemnification statement remains valid or until revoked.

D. The City Code contains an outdated citation to the revocation section and does not provide guidance for when a permit may be revoked. This Ordinance adds criteria for permit revocation.

E. The City Code provides that the City Manager issues the portable sign permit and also considers any appeals of permit denials. This Ordinance provides that the City Engineer will issue and manage the permits and continues to provide that appeals go to the City Manager.

F. This Ordinance also updates the Code to conform to legal developments, including the enactment of new Colorado laws.

G. The City Council has determined that the changes to City Code herein improve the regulation of portable signs in the downtown area, ensure protection of individual rights, improve compliance with said regulations, and are in the public's, City's, and permittees' best interests to protect the safety and welfare of persons using downtown sidewalks, including persons entering and leaving buildings and persons providing essential utility and emergency services.

In light of the foregoing recitals, which the Council hereby makes and adopts as determinations and findings, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS as follows:

Section 1. Section 24-151 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 24-151. – Definitions.**

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this Article, have the meaning respectively ascribed to them in this Section:

*Permittee* means the person authorized by the City and issued a portable sign permit to place a portable sign upon a City sidewalk or sidewalk railing.

*Person* means any person or entity, including but not limited to a corporation, limited liability company, partnership, unincorporated association or joint venture.

*Portable sign* means a sign that rests on the sidewalk or is attached to sidewalk railings and that is neither temporarily nor permanently affixed to the sidewalk or railing or to an adjacent building or structure.

*Portable Sign Placement Area* means the Downtown Zone District.

*Sidewalk* means any surface provided for the use of pedestrians.

Section 2. Section 24-152 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 24-152. – Portable sign permit required.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to erect, place or maintain any portable sign on or within any public right-of-way in the City except within the Portable Sign Placement Area pursuant to a permit from the City Engineer approving the location, construction, stability and other aspects of such portable sign under the provisions of this Article. Any portable sign that has not been authorized by a valid permit issued by the City under this Article may be removed by the City without notice, notwithstanding any provision in § 17-42 of this Code to the contrary.

Section 3. Section 24-153 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 24-153. – Portable sign permits; term; transfer of permit.**

(a) Applications for a portable sign permit must be submitted to the City Engineer in writing on a form provided by the City and shall be accompanied by a written statement,

in a form satisfactory to the City Attorney, agreeing to indemnify and hold harmless the City, its officers and employees from any loss, liability or damage, including expenses and costs, for bodily or personal injury or property damage sustained by any person as a result of the installation, use or maintenance of the portable sign for which the permit is issued. Nothing herein shall be construed as a waiver of immunity as provided by the provisions of the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, Section 24-10-101 et seq., C.R.S. As a condition of issuance, each permittee must pay a one (1) time fee of forty dollars (\$40) per permit for the duration in Subsection (c) of this Section.

(b) The City Engineer's decision whether to issue or deny the issuance of a permit shall be made within fifteen (15) business days following the date that a complete application has been submitted to the City.

(c) Permits shall be valid for so long as the permittee's indemnification statement under Subsection (a) of this Section remains valid or until revoked pursuant to § 24-156 of this Chapter or pursuant to Article XI, Section 10 of the Charter.

(d) Permits are not transferrable to another person or another location.

Section 4. Section 24-154 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 24-154. – Placement and removal of portable signs.**

...

(b) No portable sign placed on the surface of a sidewalk may be placed, installed, used or maintained:

...

(5) On any portion of a utility cover, meter and/or valve box cover, vent cover for underground utilities or on any granite or other decorative sidewalk without special approval by the City Engineer;

...

(8) At a location used for public utilities, transportation or other public or governmental purposes that, in the judgment of the City Engineer, is incompatible with portable signs;

...

(c) Portable signs placed on the surface of a sidewalk shall not be secured to any City property such as a light pole, sign post or tree, and shall not be secured to the surfaces

upon which they are situated by bolts, but must instead be secured by weight or other anchoring device approved by the City Engineer, and shall not be anchored by penetration of soil beneath tree grates.

(d) No more than one (1) portable sign, or two (2) sign surfaces in the case of portable signs attached to sidewalk railings, shall be permitted for each permittee in the building that is adjacent to the location of the sign.

. . .

Section 5. Section 24-156 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 24-156. – Revocation.**

(a) The City Engineer may revoke any permits issued hereunder:

(1) If conditions change so that the permit application could have been denied in the first instance;

(2) In the event of a local emergency under City Code § 2-666 or a national special security event under 6 USC § 601(9);

(3) If continuation of the permit presents a clear and present danger to the public;

(4) If it is in the City's or public's interest to revoke the permit; or

(5) For noncompliance with permit terms and conditions.

(b) The permittee is not entitled to a refund of any fees paid, and the permittee may be liable to pay additional costs incurred by the City due to the revocation.

(c) In the event that the Colorado Department of Transportation determines to take jurisdiction of the issuance of permits on sidewalks adjacent to state highways, and requests the City to revoke permits granted under this Article, the City Engineer may summarily revoke any permits issued hereunder.

Section 6. Section 24-157 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 24-157. – Violations.**

(a) Upon determination by the City Engineer that a portable sign has been installed, used or maintained in violation of this Article, the City Engineer may order the permittee to correct the offending condition. Such order will be sent by electronic mail or by

registered mail, return receipt requested, to the permittee. The order will describe the offending condition, state the actions necessary to correct the condition and establish a date for compliance that is not less than five (5) business days from the date that the order is sent to the permittee. The order will inform the permittee of the right to appeal pursuant to § 24-158 of this Article. The City Engineer may remove the offending portable sign and revoke the portable sign permit if the permittee has not appealed the order or removed the sign by the date set for compliance in the order and the offending condition has not been cured by said date. The City Engineer will cause an inspection to be made of any corrected condition of a portable sign or of a portable sign that is reinstated after removal under this Section.

(b) Any impounded portable sign will be treated as unclaimed property and disposed of by the City if not claimed within one (1) year of the date of impoundment.

Introduced, considered favorably on first reading on September 16, 2025, and approved on second reading for final passage on October 7, 2025.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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City Clerk

Effective Date: October 17, 2025

Approving Attorney: Heather N. Jarvis

Exhibit: None